

for Democrats to burn down the House in order to save it."

Burn down the House, Mr. Speaker. That is their strategy. Many on the left think that that is the way to take back this House, and we on this side of the aisle are going to continue working on the issues that the American people care about and continue moving this Nation forward.

ORGANIZED LABOR LEADING THE FIGHT FOR ECONOMIC SECURITY FOR AMERICA

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. KUHLMANN of New York). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. STRICKLAND) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. STRICKLAND. Mr. Speaker, as our Nation struggles with soaring health care costs, bankrupt pensions, and devastating job loss, it is organized labor that leads the fight to protect, defend, and advance the economic security of our Nation.

I was recently meeting with leaders from the Ohio Association of Public School Employees, and we talked about all of the issues facing our Members and their members in my home district and throughout the State of Ohio. We talked about the contract-by-contract struggle to hold health care costs down. We talked about the impact of the State budget and the devastating ideas to expand privatization, make it easier to lay off workers, and force school districts to minimize or diminish health insurance, and to limit collective bargaining.

The answer to Ohio's problems is not to weaken labor unions like OAPSE, but to strengthen them and to let all of our communities share in the benefits that labor has worked so hard to achieve. I am proud of unions like OAPSE, and I am proud to share in their fight for dignity and respect.

Right now, in my State, we have a crisis for our retirees, the very people who gave their entire working lives to serve children in Ohio's schools. They need a retirement that offers a good quality of life and one that relieves the pressure of deciding between food and medicine.

Mr. Speaker, we need to take care of the people who take care of our kids; and if what is happening in Ohio is any indication, we are failing miserably.

On Monday of this week, I was at a school in my district; and while at that school, I learned of schools in our region terminating breakfast programs in order to save money. I learned of art and music classes being canceled. I learned of libraries being closed in some schools, and operating on a half-time basis in others. I learned of teachers of gifted students being laid off. I learned of high schools where all foreign language classes have been canceled. In short, I heard about conditions which, left unabated, will lead to the disintegration of our great State.

But standing here in the people's House, I am hopeful. I am hopeful be-

cause the people of Ohio are fighters, and unions like OAPSE are leading that fight. Because of their efforts, we will bring back Ohio and Ohio will once again lead the Nation in building a better future for our kids.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. BURTON of Indiana addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Mr. WESTMORELAND. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to take my Special Order at this time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Georgia?

There was no objection.

LET US WORK TOGETHER FOR THE GOOD OF AMERICA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. WESTMORELAND) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. WESTMORELAND. Mr. Speaker, our friends on the other side of the aisle have opened a Pandora's box by spending most of the 109th Congress focused on ethics matters. With all the righteous indignation they can muster, the minority has called for investigations of the majority leader's every move, even digging up stories as far back as 1997.

At the same time, the minority prohibited the Ethics Committee for 4 months from convening to hear the charges that they were leveling against a Member of Congress. It is obvious, Mr. Speaker, that our colleagues on the other side of the aisle simply did not want to give the majority leader a chance to make his case to the committee and to clear his name. They hoped to look like paragons of purity. Instead, we know now that they are just the purveyors of partisan politics. By grinding the Ethics Committee to a halt, they knew that every story about Tom DeLay would have the phrase "under investigation." And why give him a chance to prove his innocence when you can trap your political nemesis in a cloud of suspicion and controversy? Why have a fair hearing when you can rig public opinion through implications and accusations in the news media?

The minority leadership has called for investigations of Mr. DELAY's travels. Mr. DELAY has welcomed the chance to present his case, and I have full faith that he will present his case vigorously. But I would caution and I would ask the minority leader to be more careful to consider the implications for her caucus the next time that they call for a congressional probe. The

minority leader and the minority whip have now trapped some of their own Members with their own fiery rhetoric.

The Democratic leadership called for investigations of lobbyists paying for travel. What they did not count on was that several members of their caucus took trips paid for by registered lobbyists. Some have admitted that they missed filing deadlines for disclosures on numerous trips. To their credit, they apologized for their errors, but then went on to say, I can tell you one thing, Jack Abramoff was not on any one of the trips. But Abramoff was involved in travel for other Democratic Members. The Associated Press reported yesterday that two Democrats "received travel expenses initially paid for by lobbyist Jack Abramoff on his credit card or by his firm."

Now, Mr. Speaker, I do not want this body to denigrate itself. We do not serve the people who elected us and we do not serve our parties in the long term if we engage in an ethics war with charges and counter-charges. Let us be clear: there are no winners in an ethics war. Everyone loses. Instead of helping the American people, we disgust them. Instead of building up, we tear down the working relationship that we need across the aisle to do this Nation's business.

We need to concentrate on the good things that we have done so far in the 109th Congress, like abolishing the inheritance tax, the energy bill, the transportation bill, bankruptcy reform, class action lawsuit reform, winning the war on terror, protecting our borders; and there are many more good things that we need to do in this country, Mr. Speaker, for the American people. Let us work together.

INNOVATIVE HEALTH CARE INITIATIVES FOR AMERICA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Rhode Island (Mr. LANGEVIN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. LANGEVIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to acknowledge Cover the Uninsured Week. Many of us have heard from our constituents this week, just as we have in the weeks, months, and years prior, asking that we make health insurance coverage a top priority of the 109th Congress. America's families are living in fear that someone they love might develop a health problem that they cannot afford. We must begin a meaningful dialogue about this problem that will continue until every American has access to quality, affordable health insurance.

This national disgrace has reached crisis proportions. Forty-five million Americans, more than 8 million of whom are children and more than 80 percent of whom live in working families, are one ambulance trip away from financial devastation.

I was pleased to join the gentlewoman from California (Leader PELOSI) and other Democrats in cosponsoring

three bills introduced this week as part of the Democrats' plan to build on programs that already work. Together, the Family Care Act, the Medicare Early Access Act, and the Small Business Health Insurance Promotion Act would cover over half of all uninsured Americans. I have also been proud to be a part of other initiatives, both nationally and in my home State of Rhode Island, to expand existing health insurance programs for retirees, children with disabilities, and adults attempting to return to the workforce. These are all important aspects to addressing the health care crisis, and I am honored to be a part of building momentum around a solution.

Just as individuals and families know that we are facing a health care crisis, our small business owners know that we are in crisis as well. Rising health care costs are undermining their ability to purchase coverage for their employees. It has threatened their ability to keep their businesses economically viable, and they are frustrated with the increasing burden of negotiating and administering health care plans that are taking on extra costs or passing them on to employees just to maintain level coverage. Without systematic change, these problems will continue to threaten the economic and health security of all Americans.

What frustrates me the most about the health insurance crisis is what little attention it receives. But I believe that with the proper amount of consideration and planning, the health care system in America can be saved. An enormous amount of money circulates through our health care system.

We spend \$35 billion on uncompensated care for individuals who do not have health insurance, just last year alone, with Federal, State, and local governments covering as much as 85 percent of those costs. Would it not be better for American families and also more cost effective to transfer a large share of these funds to a new program to subsidize the cost of covering the uninsured? We spend millions treating illnesses diagnosed at later stages, thus requiring more costly treatments because we did not offer people the screenings to catch these problems earlier. This is the least efficient way possible to treat people.

While we may not be in the best of economic times, if we made this issue a priority and committed ourselves to spending our health care dollars more wisely, we could offer all Americans access to quality, affordable care.

Now, with these principles of efficiency and inclusion in mind, I have developed a model for universal health insurance introduced last year as the Americans Health Benefits Plan. This bill is modeled after the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program, which everyone in this Chamber is familiar with, as it offers coverage to Members of Congress, their families, and staffs.

Under my proposal, private companies will compete to offer health insur-

ance, attracting enrollees on the basis of benefits as well as efficiency, service, and lower premiums. The government should make a substantial contribution to every American's premium, and those for whom paying a portion of the premium would be a hardship, the government should offer subsidies as we currently do under Medicaid.

Employers should continue to contribute to the health care system, and they could do so through a payroll tax which would fund the government contribution, but the burden of negotiating and administering health care plans should be taken on by the Federal Government.

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A National template for this model already exists. FEHBP manages health insurance for more than 8 million Federal employees, annuitants and dependents. This program is administered by the Office of Personnel Management, which assumes responsibility for approving or disapproving carriers, negotiating benefit and rate changes, and auditing carriers' operations under the law.

With administrative costs of less than 1 percent, OPM has managed to offer a wide variety of health care choices and protections for Federal employees.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that the Federal Government should offer this kind of coverage and oversight to all Americans and I sincerely hope to continue this dialogue with my colleagues beyond the Cover the Uninsured Week, but this is an important place to start.

PRAISING THE ANNIVERSARY OF V-E DAY IN EUROPE

SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. KUHLM). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas, (Mr. MCCAUL) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. MCCAUL of Texas. Mr. Speaker, tonight I rise to commemorate the 60th anniversary of our Nation's victory in Europe. And in doing so, I also like to honor men like my father and millions of others who answered freedom's call in fighting World War II. When we consider generations of our past, no one exemplifies the essence of America better than those, part of what we now call, the Greatest Generation.

To this day, and forever, I will be proud to say, my father was a part of this outstanding group, which led us to victory during World War II. As a 20-year-old bombardier-navigator in the Army Air Corps, my father, Major Jim McCaul, flew more than 30 bombing missions over Europe.

This included the largest bombing mission of the war in support of the D-day invasion. He flew a B-17 bomber, the flying fortress of the war, as he and others helped defeat Adolph Hitler and the Nazi reign of terror. And like most men of his generation, my father did not talk much about what he had done

and seen over the skies of Europe. It was simply too painful.

However, when he did talk about his experiences, dad would describe his airplane as a tin can with wings that was easy prey for the flak fired from below and the Luftwaffe bullets raining down from above. He recalled watching his buddies getting shot down and the loss that he personally felt. Indeed on each mission, one out of every three planes were shot down.

And when my father passed away in 1985, he received a letter from President Ronald Reagan commending him for his service to his country. Perhaps Winston Churchill said it best, when he said of this generation, this was their finest hour.

Our Nation is replete with stories such as my father's. And while the names and faces of many of the GI Joes may be forgotten, their heroic deeds that helped secure our Nation's ultimate victory in Europe will be emblazoned as legends in our National conscience forever.

Mr. Speaker, as time passes, we come close to forever losing the personal connection to these great individuals and their historic accounts. In order to preserve these heroic stories for future generations, I strongly urge veterans to participate in the Veterans History Project housed in the Library of Congress.

For this generation of Americans, whose character and resolve was molded by the Great Depression, defeating tyranny and the hatred of the Third Reich was just another call to answer. They performed their duty with honor, it was not theirs to question. It was simply expected.

Instead of succumbing to hardship, their resolve was stiffened and they ended up leading our land and our world to one of the greatest victories in history. We see that same attitude and determination today from the men and women in Iraq and Afghanistan. And like the greatest generation, Americans are now in distant lands fighting the threat and horror of terrorism.

Sixty years ago, we defeated fascism. Today, we fight Islamic extremism, but the reason we fight is the same, to guarantee freedom. The resolve that my father served with came from the support he knew that he had at home. We must show that same support for our troops now. We must strengthen their resolve by letting them know that their cause is just.

We will never forget their victories, just as we will never forget the victories in Europe which came at such a great cost. Hundreds of thousands of my parents' generation were killed in the name of freedom and democracy. Few cases are as worthy, few prices are as great. We must always remember not just the victory in Europe, but also what it meant. It saved an entire world from tyranny, and gave people the chance to live under flags of freedom.

Victory in Europe Day will forever stand as an example of how America